

A Houseful of DECORATING IDEAS

A complete pictorial tour of
ARMSTRONG'S IDEA HOUSE



Rebirth of a House

An old out-dated dwelling is brought back to life through the magic of good decorating

If you'd been driving along the Lincoln Highway outside Lancaster, Pennsylvania, a short time ago, chances are you'd never have noticed the uninspiring house shown at the top of this page. Today, if you took the same trip, you couldn't miss the house. Its new paint glistens through the trees, terraces spread out invitingly, and its remodeled exterior reflects good taste in the preservation of old-fashioned charm. It's known across the country as Armstrong's Idea House.

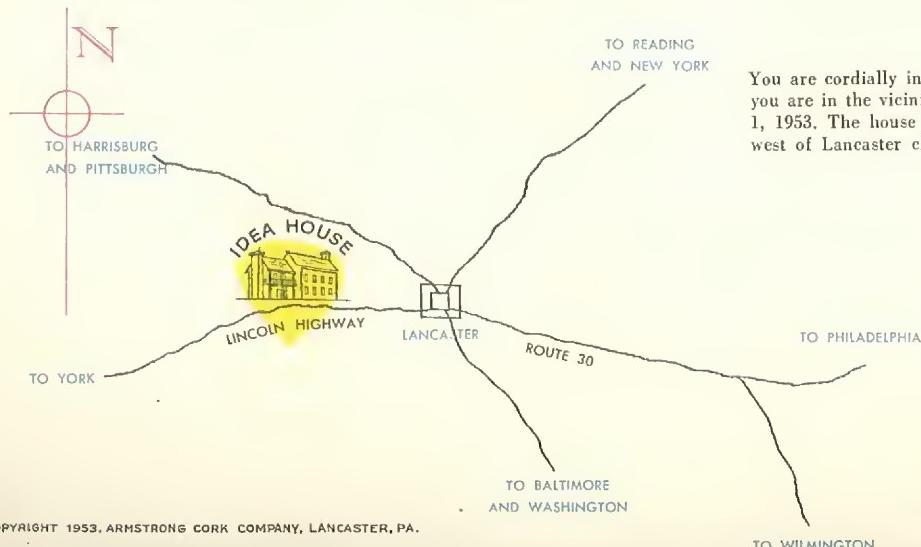
Remodeling started after Armstrong decided to combine new decorating ideas and the solution to decorating problems into one house—a house that could be visited by homemakers who were interested in seeing inexpensive decorating suggestions that they



could adapt to their own homes. Armstrong's Bureau of Interior Decoration has provided the inspirations that should appeal to you as a home decorator.

This book tells the story of what happened. Fresh paint and attractive wallpaper were applied throughout, and new floors of Armstrong's Linoleum were installed to provide beauty and comfort upstairs and down. Old furniture was made over—and ideas for better living were devised for every room.

We suggest you keep this book as a handy source of numerous useful decorating ideas, from lamps and draperies to the newest styles in Armstrong's Linoleum. You'll soon understand why the house is called Armstrong's Idea House.



You are cordially invited to visit Armstrong's Idea House in person if you are in the vicinity of Lancaster, Pa., between April 1 and October 1, 1953. The house is on U. S. Route 30, the Lincoln Highway, just west of Lancaster city limits.



This closet's really efficient. Metal grillwork for shelves and on the umbrella stand helps ventilate wet rainwear. Drip pans catch water for easy disposal. Tinkertoy pegs hold odds and ends. Spare keys are kept handy on a labeled decorative keyboard.

Here you see how the parlor window was exchanged for a handsome entrance. The side window is now in the pretty powder room which, like the coat closet, has a sliding door to save space. In the powder room you can just glimpse the quaint mirror over the washstand, which was made from an old hatrack. In the hall, the oval design of the wallpaper suggested fastening several mirrors on the wall, like the one over the repainted chest. Then the floral design was cut out of the paper and pasted around the edge to frame the mirror—a good idea for many rooms. Despite hall traffic, the smart floor of Armstrong's Spatter Linoleum will stay new looking for many years.



Floor: Armstrong's Spatter Linoleum, Style No. 5011

Welcome to the new front hall



Here's where we start our tour. The front entrance used to open right into the living room, but when the house was remodeled the front door was changed to the other side of the house. You'd never guess it, but the hall used to be an old seldom-used parlor. The door replaces the parlor window, and a section of the old room was partitioned off to give us a lovely powder room and a huge coat closet. Most of the charming pieces you see here were reclaimed from old furniture—even the table supports were made from old porch posts. The color scheme was suggested by the floor of Armstrong's Spatter Linoleum, a style that blends beautifully with either modern or traditional furnishings. It's a practical floor for a hall, for despite heavy traffic it will last for years without showing wear. The spatter dots hide tracked-in dirt until it can be cleaned up.



A problem living room was made attractive and comfortable

Most old houses have some bad features that you can't eliminate without spending a fortune. To keep expenses down, you have to think up some way of making the most out of what you have. Such was the case here. A corner fireplace is never particularly desirable, and the one that was in this old house was anything but attractive. We started making the best of it by removing the old mantle and refacing the fireplace with paneling from floor to ceiling. This made it a more integral part of the room, but still left the problem of having a corner cut off diagonally. After a bit of thinking, the solution was obvious—soften the appearance of the other three corners of the room.

A built-in corner cabinet, that's described in detail next to the little picture below, helped considerably to make the diagonal fireplace less conspicuous. Large green plants always help to blend decorative colors and soften architectural lines, and that's exactly what we used opposite the fireplace. In the other corner which can't be seen in the photographs there's a permanent card table. It's surprising how much more it's used and enjoyed when it can't be folded away.

To carry out the diagonal feeling that we were working toward, a tile effect in Armstrong's Linoleum was chosen, and the design laid at a forty-five degree angle to the wall. This tied in handsomely with both the fireplace and the corner cabinet and gave a rather distinctive appearance to the treatment of the floor.

Any living room should be designed for your comfort and relaxation, and you'll find that the contents of the diagonal corner cabinet contribute to both. While you sit back in one of the comfortable armchairs, you can watch television, listen to the radio, or play your favorite records; for TV, radio, and record player are all built in. You'll also enjoy using a desk-breakfront, especially if it's made by someone in your family—and it can be done, too—by anyone who has a flair for carpentry. The upper doors have a simple framework around a brass grill. The lower doors are plywood with half round molding.

This is a good example of how Armstrong's Linoleum floors can help solve decorating problems.

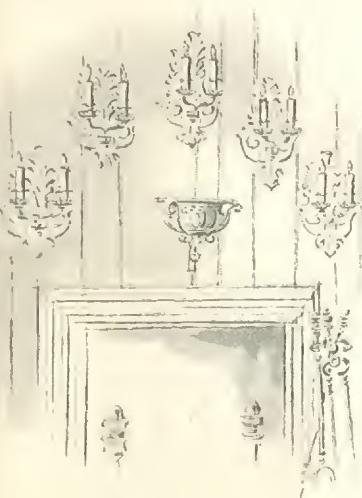
Bringing color into this room played a big part in making the delightful change, and the floor of Armstrong's Linoleum in its Colortone styling was the start. The yellow, which is intermingled with pearl gray and a touch of rich green, has a relationship to the yellow spatter dots in the hall and also suggested the color for the living room draperies and wallpaper. Woodwork, ceiling, and drapery fringe were made white to further emphasize the fresh, crisp feeling. The result was like letting sunshine into a dark cavern. Finally, a neutral colored rug was added and a brilliant red was used for the accent color.

With all the striking styles being offered in Armstrong's Linoleum, it's being used more and more as a moderately priced wall-to-wall flooring and can be used effectively either with or without a rug. In either case, a linoleum floor makes a big contribution to the room's appearance. This is vividly demonstrated in the dining room which is the next room you'll see.





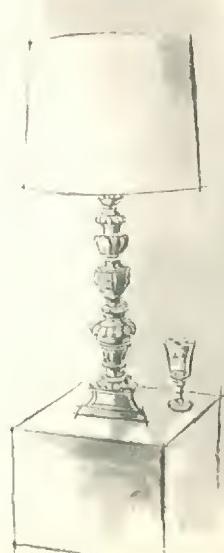
Floor: Armstrong's Straight Line Inlaid Linoleum, Style No. 1611, Colortone Series



Old wrought iron light brackets were painted and grouped over the fireplace. Tiny bulbs, about the size of a candle flame, give a twinkling effect. The flower holder is an old ornamental basin cut in half and painted white.



This sketch shows some details of the breakfront—the metal mesh doors, the hinged desk top, and the drawers for writing materials. There's concealed lighting in the center recess, a storage cupboard underneath.



It wasn't too difficult to convert old andirons into lamps. The centers were bored for wiring and shade holders were attached. The end tables are just boxes painted black.



Floor: Armstrong's Spatter Linoleum, Style No. 5012; border Plain Gray, No. 22



In the center of the dining room table in this summertime view you'll see an unusual decorating idea—a big planter that takes the place of the center leaf. It's not too difficult to make, it's inexpensive, and it certainly adds to the feeling of bringing the outdoors inside for summer living. The slipcovers for the chairs are made of ordinary Turkish toweling decorated with red rickrack. To clean them, just toss them in your washing machine. Armstrong's Spatter Linoleum fits in with any style of decoration—and there's a Spatter floor to go with any color scheme. You can choose from thirteen lovely colorings.

A room for informal or formal dining

Too often a pretty dining room is admired more than it's used. Here is a dining room with a dual personality—it can have an informal atmosphere for summer buffets (shown above), and a formal atmosphere for winter dinner parties (shown below). With a few minutes' work, consisting mostly of changing slipcovers and draperies and taking up a rug or putting one down, the room becomes completely different and suited to the season's needs. When the rug is down, it's framed by the glistening Plain Gray

border of Armstrong's Linoleum. When the rug is removed, there's a beautiful floor of gay red Spatter Linoleum. You needn't have any worries over spilled things as Armstrong's Linoleum is easily cleaned.

Another good trick in this dining room is the solution to the problem of not having enough lighting. Here four inexpensive tin lanterns, painted black and fixed to the ceiling, provide a dramatic lighting effect. Take a moment to see the other ideas here, and then we'll go down to the playroom basement.



By doing some simple remodeling, and using a liberal amount of black lacquer, all of the old dining room furniture was reclaimed. The handsome console was made by cutting off the legs of the old china cupboard and setting it on top of the buffet which had also been trimmed down. At right, the chairs are shown with their winter slipcovers.





Floor: Armstrong's De Luxe Asphalt Tile, No. C-326, C-324, B-318, D-327, C-329

Once a cellar—now a playroom

One of the most popular ways to decorate a basement room is in the style of an old English tavern. This room has everything to entertain young and old—game tables, dartboards, piano, record player, magazines and books, beverage bar, and a wonderful dance floor of Armstrong's Asphalt Tile. It's Armstrong's Asphalt Tile that makes the whole room practical because the destructive alkaline moisture in basement concrete would ruin most other floors. But Armstrong's Asphalt Tile is made especially to resist the harmful effects of alkaline moisture. The supporting column in the center of the room has been cleverly made into a handy magazine and music rack. The use of metal mesh saved time and money on building the racks and added to their decoration.



Wasted basement space can be made into one of the most usable areas in your home. It's good sense to start with a floor of Armstrong's Asphalt Tile. Beyond solving the alkaline moisture problem in basement floors, it will give years of service under rough usage. This random design is just one of the countless effects that can be created with this floor since it goes down tile by tile.



Just count the ideas in this kitchen

If you are one of the thousands of women who spend a large part of your day in an inefficient kitchen, you'll have a warm appreciation for the thrilling "kitchen department" of the Idea House. Let's begin with the stove—or, more accurately, the stoves, because there are two of them. Two apartment-size stoves give you a double oven and more cooking capacity than one big stove but don't cost so much. Over the stove, a metal grillwork shelf provides a mighty handy place to set hot pans. It's simply metal building lath in a metal frame. On the right, the dining corner is full of good ideas, beginning with the big table on wheels that gives you extra counter space when and where you need it, as well as a dining table. It has a durable plastic top of Armstrong's Corlon® that's practically stainless. Along the wall are two comfortably cushioned seats, and back of one is a decorative storage wall. Every one of those squares is a cupboard for storing table appliances like toasters, mixers, and waffle irons. Below, where you see the toaster, is a ledge with electric outlets right at hand. At the far right is a place for the telephone and for recipe books. That big cupboard under the telephone shelf is where the step-stool is kept.

One of the things that makes this kitchen so attractive is the color scheme—and that came right out of the Armstrong's Linoleum Floor. This abstract floral design, called Swedish Modern, is a smart new style in Armstrong's Embossed Linoleum. Although it has a tile effect, there are no joints or cracks to catch the

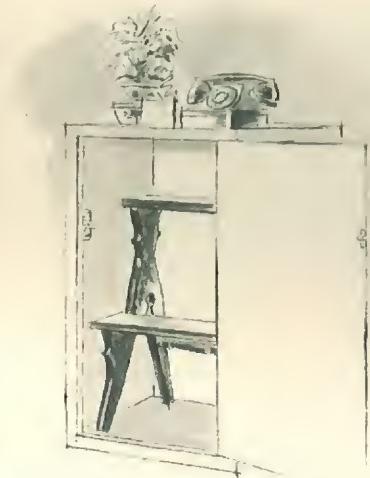


dirt. New designs like this keep Armstrong's Linoleum at top popularity in kitchens, and today it's still the best flooring buy for your money. Practically seamless, and with a smooth lustrous surface, it's not a dirt-catcher, and it can be cleaned with the greatest of ease. It's greaseproof—and that's very important in a kitchen. Just as important is the fact that Armstrong's Linoleum is comfortable underfoot.

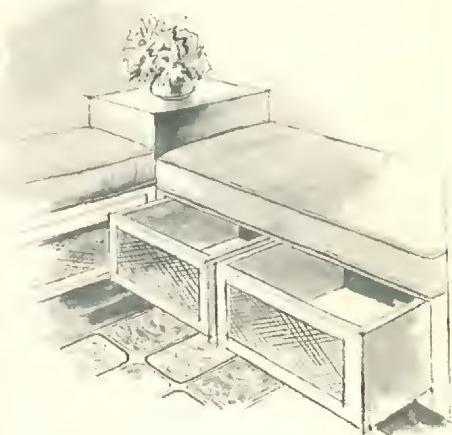
The china cabinets along the wall have sliding doors that are never in the way. In the absence of a window over the sink, a mirror was used to give the room an additional feeling of spaciousness. Don't miss that wonderful cutting board at the left—it's supported by legs on casters and slides in and out of a slot. In the corner are two Lazy Susans, the upper one for dry groceries and the lower one for utensils. All counter tops are Armstrong's Corlon, the wonderful new plastic material that can be flashed up the wall to eliminate dirt-catching corners and simplify housekeeping.



Floor: Armstrong's Embossed Inlaid Linoleum, Style No. 5840



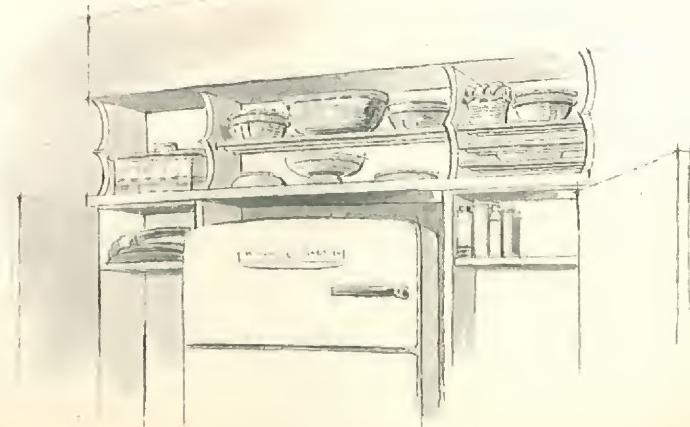
With the door of this large cupboard open, you can see what a convenient "hide-away" it makes for the step-stool. The stool is handy for use when telephoning or when the top of the cupboard is used as a kitchen desk.



Even the space under the cushioned seats has been put to good use. These airy drawers are vegetable bins and roll out with a flick of your hand. The lattice-work fronts of the drawers are metal lath. Fruits, vegetables are handy but out of the way.



Below is shown a part of the room that doesn't appear in either photograph—the refrigerator wall. Two tall cupboards flanking the refrigerator provide ample space for brooms on one side and hanging clothes on the other. Above are shelves made of wooden dowels so they seldom need dusting. They're for storage of trays and baskets.





Floor: Armstrong's Straight Line Inlaid Linoleum, Style No. 1613, Colortone Series

Any girl would love a bedroom like this . . .

Putting glamour into a bedroom isn't always easy, especially if you're operating on a low budget, but it can be done. The attractive looking French Provincial bed was made from the headboards of two old twin beds. The lush looking dressing table is "home-made" and of very inexpensive construction. The smooth top is Armstrong's new plastic, Corlon. Although the floor represents a moderate investment, it's certainly a good one and pays for itself time and time again over the years. You're never faced with the costs of expensive refinishing, and you'll find extra dividends, too, in easy house-cleaning. With the beautiful graining in this floor of Armstrong's Linoleum, you can have the luxurious look of a wall-to-wall floor covering at a nominal cost.



As you can see in the "before" photograph at right, many improvements were made in this room—but none will delight a girl more than the arrangements for storing clothes. At the left is the new closet wall with its built-in chest of drawers flanked by two large closets that are completely fitted with clothes racks, shoe racks, hat shelves—everything a girl could wish for. Up on top, are wonderful deep storage cupboards. The doors in the little cupboard above the chest are made with real chicken wire, to carry out the wallpaper theme.





Floor: Armstrong's Embossed Inlaid Linoleum, Style No. 5431

... or a boy—one like this ...



Actually, *two* boys can relish this room with its corner arrangement of the bunk beds. This makes the best use of the available space by providing a good big clothes closet under the top bunk—and the doors of the closet, covered with cork bulletin board, are just what two lads need for pin-ups. Don't miss the adjustable reading lights in the bunks, or the solid wooden pegs for hanging up coats and hats. At the end of the bunks there's a bookcase with two handy bins for storing boys' treasures. A ranch atmosphere predominates, all the way from the red leather handles on the drawers to the colorful floor of Armstrong's Embossed Linoleum. It's a handsome floor that can take the beating two "cowboys" give it, and parents appreciate its practicality.



Before redecorating, this bedroom was livable but uninspiring. Planning and imagination, based on a boy's point of view, made this room the envy of every youngster in town. The giant cork bulletin board, for pinning up maps and pictures, also makes a good "airport." It runs right into the ceiling so that model airplanes can be hung in mid-air. A light-tree with adjustable lamps puts light wherever needed. Two unpainted chests were finished with durable plastic tops of Armstrong's Corlon. Boys have a knack for tracking in dirt, but with an Armstrong's Linoleum floor, cleaning up after them is easy.



Elegance in the bedroom needn't strain your budget

Here's one of the most luxurious rooms in the house, yet it was just about the most economical one to furnish. With the exception of the new rug and floor of Armstrong's Linoleum, all the furnishings in this bedroom were reclaimed from the attic and basement. It proves what can be done even on a modest budget.

Grandmother's bed with the high old-fashioned headboard was dragged out of storage and remodeled with a saw and paintbrush. The footboard was cut down and the headboard was painted to match the walls. No one worries about its out-dated appearance now, because it blends right into the walls. That's an idea you can use with any furniture that's lost its charm. The night tables and dressing table also were obtained from made-over old furniture. They all came from an old dresser and bureau. Some of the drawers were used full size, framed and topped for the night



The photograph you see at the right shows the other side of the room. It's a good view of the space allotted to the man of the house. The efficient chest of drawers that holds shirts, underwear, neckties, and the other clothing accessories was remodeled from an old chiffonier. The center section is all that remains of the front of the original piece—and it was turned on end as a vertical drawer for ties and socks. The stacks of drawers from the old chiffonier were turned back to back. Now they open at the ends of the re-styled chest. Those commodious clothes closets you see along the right wall weren't there at the start. Space for them was "stolen" from the adjoining room by cutting through the wall. Then the closets were fitted with built-in drawers, shelves, racks, and closed with sliding doors.

tables. Other drawers were cut in half, topped and bridged with boards. Fronts and sides of these pieces were painted gray, while the tops were given a simulated marble treatment. Matching silver handles give an important touch of relationship to all these pieces and heighten their beauty.

An 1890 office chair, picked up at a second-hand store, became the vanity seat—extremely practical because it swivels around. Painted a shiny black and upholstered with blue velvet, it became pretty and feminine. The bed lamps were made from the ornaments of an old-fashioned coal stove. The color scheme of charcoal gray, azure blue, and silver, with accents of pink, represents the height of modern elegance. That's where the Carpetone® styling in Armstrong's Embossed Linoleum makes its most important contribution to this room, too. The handsome combination of black, white, and gray in the "carved" pattern of the linoleum adds to the beauty of the textured rug and forms the basis for the rest of the room's decoration. It also offers the practical advantages you always get in a floor of Armstrong's Linoleum—ease of cleaning, lasting beauty, and underfoot comfort.

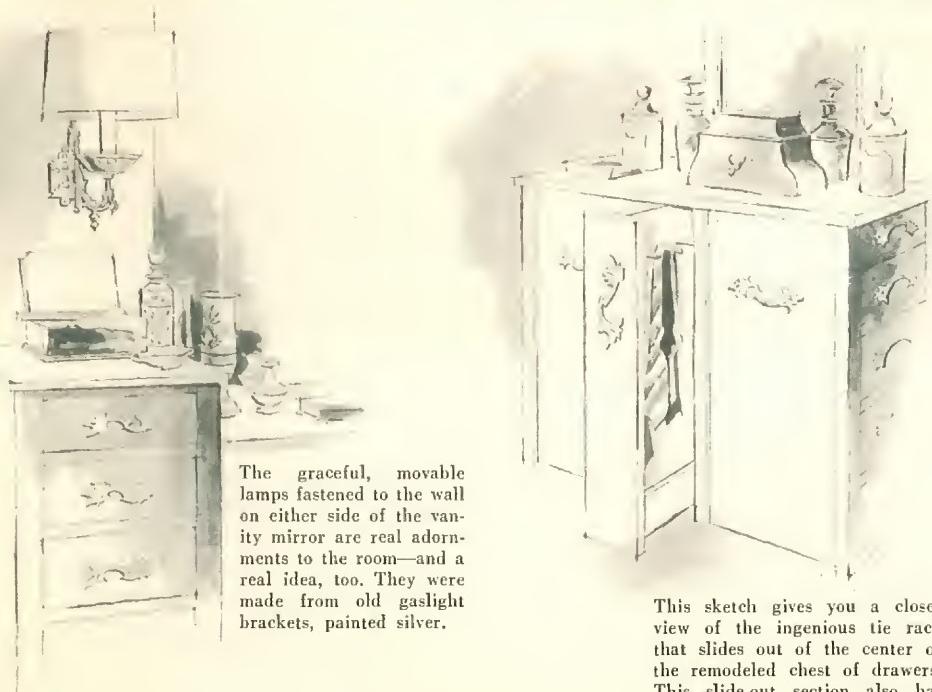
When you compare the new room with the way it looked before in the picture at left, it should be a real inspiration. Think of what you can do with the old furniture you may have stored away—or even the restoration of the furnishings you are now using but have grown tired of. A little ingenuity and time spent with household tools can pay dividends in better living.





Floor: Armstrong's Embossed Inlaid Linoleum, Style No. 5850, Carpetone Series

The black and white striped window shades look especially smart with the light blue draperies and valance. You can do striping like this yourself by applying masking tape to a white shade and then painting between the strips.



The graceful, movable lamps fastened to the wall on either side of the vanity mirror are real adornments to the room—and a real idea, too. They were made from old gaslight brackets, painted silver.

This sketch gives you a closer view of the ingenious tie rack that slides out of the center of the remodeled chest of drawers. This slide-out section also has provision for storing socks.





Floor: Armstrong's Spatter Linoleum, Style No. 5013, inset with Turquoise No. 38 and Black No. 27



Metal rods welded to Victorian keyhole escutcheons from old doors and painted black make decorative racks for towels and magazines.



When you remodel a bathroom, first consideration should be given to existing water pipes and drains. Unless plumbing changes are kept to a minimum, costs mount quickly. Since there was more than average space in the old bathroom, the lady of the house was given a combination washbowl and dressing table of her own. Minimum work was required on the water lines that ran to the old bathtub. There also was room for a man's lavatory on the side wall, and it was connected economically to the old washstand water lines. Only the new combination tub-shower in the corner required additional plumbing.

Imagine such luxury in the family bathroom



This room proves that beauty and practicality can go hand in hand. For, while a bathroom can be given decorative appeal with a smart color scheme, it must be easy to keep clean and tidy. A floor of Armstrong's Linoleum is ideally suited to both requirements. And Armstrong's Spatter Linoleum has a double meaning here. First it sets the stage for colorful decoration. Then, it keeps its beauty no matter how much splashing takes place. Soap and water can be wiped up in a jiffy from its smooth, lustrous surface and the floor is as handsome as ever. Here, Armstrong's Spatter Linoleum was given added beauty with a smart custom inset created with graceful scrolls of Plain Turquoise and strips of Plain Black linoleum. Among the other decorating tricks that add to the charm and practicality of this bathroom are the novel window shutters. Made by framing sections of the metal mesh that's ordinarily used for radiator covers, they add a smart touch and do away with the need for curtains. Women love the triple mirrors arranged over the feminine washstand. And a slanted mirror at the man's lavatory simplifies the problem of under-chin shaving.



Floor: Armstrong's Embossed Inlaid Linoleum, Style No. 5300

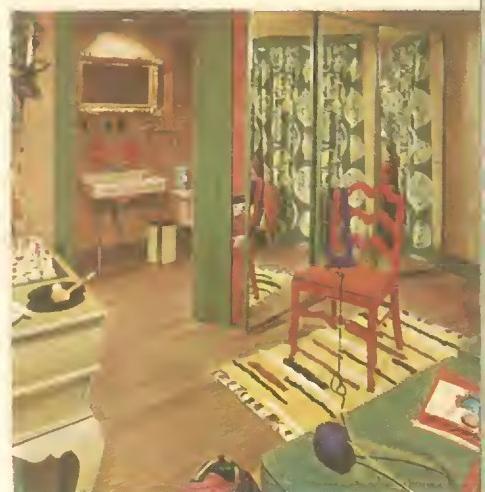
This is the spare room, it's always in use

There will always be someone in this room . . . either a member of the family or overnight guests. For as a den it's a favorite secluded spot, and as a guest room it offers real hospitality. Its twofold appeal came with the idea of designing the room to fulfill more than one need. When it's changed to a guest room, the two big hassocks, which serve as a couch, convert into two comfortable twin beds. The bedding is stored on shelves behind the woven headboards which lift up. When the bedding is being used, the shelves afford storage space for the cushions. No matter which purpose this room is converted to, the floor of Armstrong's Linoleum is always in good taste. Designed after pegged Colonial random width floors, this styling captures all the charm of this type flooring without its disadvantages. In any room that's small and in constant use, there are always the problems of floor wear and cleaning. Armstrong's Linoleum solves both problems nicely. In the first place, it's famous for its durability. As for cleaning, its smooth surface makes the task a simple one.

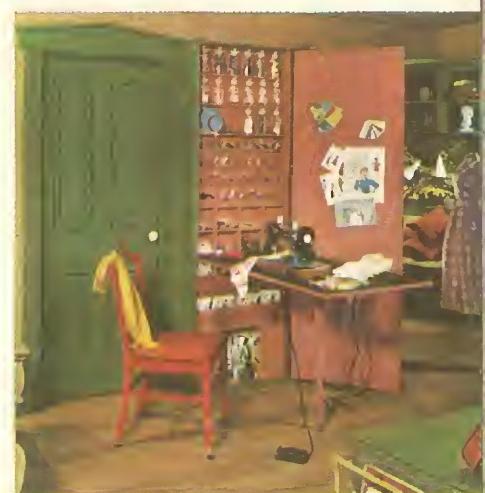
Behind the full-length mirrors are surprises galore. Open the first, there's a sewing table and a thread and notions cabinet. Behind the second, an ironing board swings down. In back of the third is a closet for unfinished sewing.



There's no nicer guest room than one with a private bathroom. The bathroom space was partitioned off from the old bedroom which was only 13 feet square. The same plank design in Armstrong's Linoleum used in the den offered a splashproof floor for the bathroom.



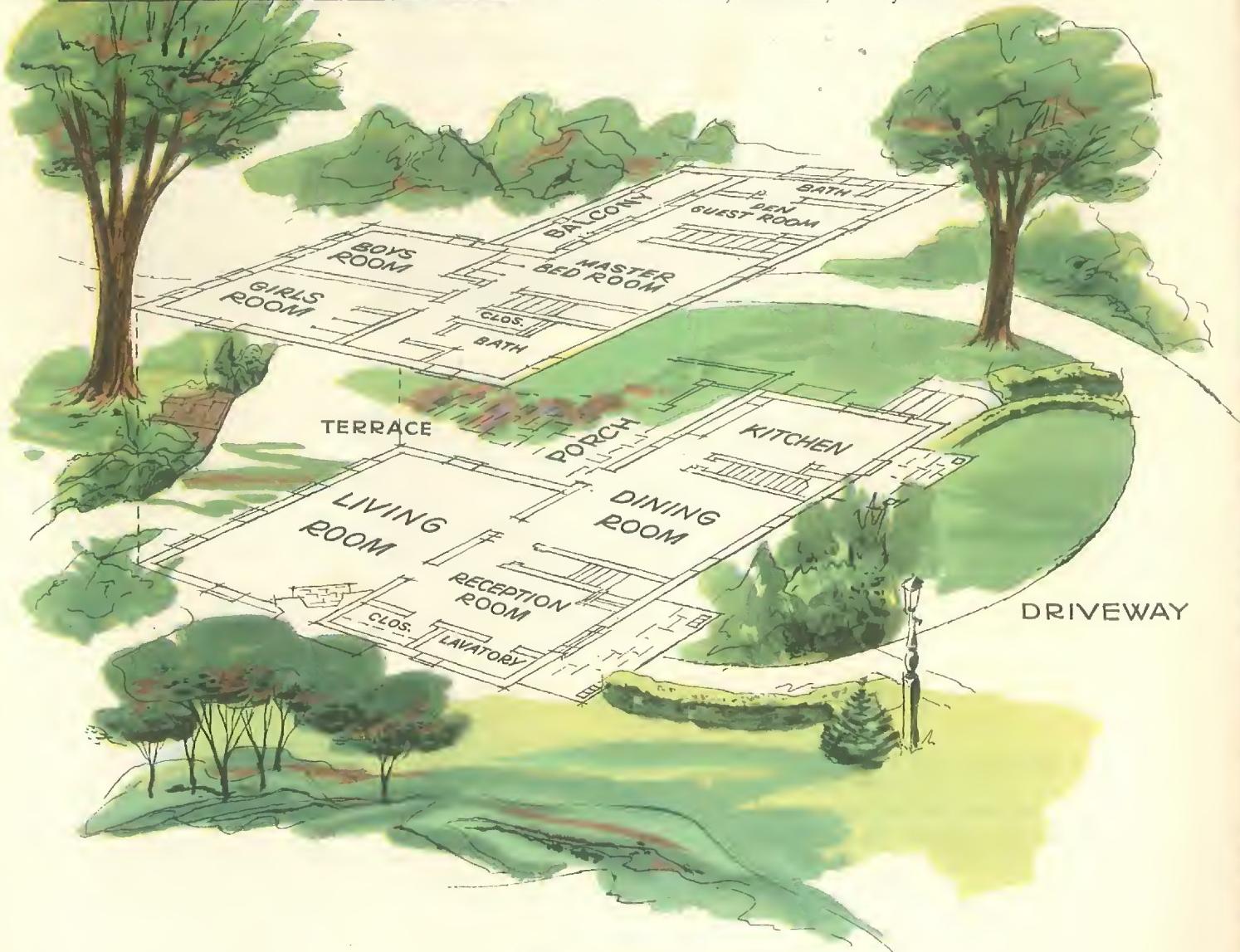
As a den, the room is a family favorite. The chessboard, inlaid in linoleum in the refinished table, lifts up to disclose a vanity compartment when guests use the room. Armstrong's "Pine" Linowall®, used in both den and bath, blends beautifully with the linoleum floor.





Floor Plan of ARMSTRONG'S IDEA HOUSE

In this floor plan drawing, you can see the whole layout of the house with the second floor in its proper relation to the rooms below. The drawing is made from the same angle as the photograph. It shows the new main entrance of the house. To get free sketch plans of any individual room—including a list of furnishings and where they may be obtained—just write to Armstrong Cork Company, North School Lane, Lancaster, Pennsylvania.



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